

Understanding Social Security Benefits and Work Incentives

**Satellite Conference and Live Webcast
Thursday September 20, 2007
2:00 - 4:00 p.m. (Central Time)**

Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
Video Communications and Distance of Learning Division

Quick Reference

- ALJ – Administrative Law Judge
- AOD – Alleged Onset Date
- BC – Blind Child
- BI – Blind Individual
- BS – Blind Spouse
- BWE – Blind Work Expense
- CDB – Childhood Disability Benefit
- CDR – Continuing Disability Reviews
- CWIC – Community Work Incentive Coordinator

Quick Reference

- DAC – Disabled Adult Child
- DC – Disabled Child
- DI – Disabled Individual
- DIB – Disabled Individual Benefit
- DS – Disabled Spouse
- DWB – Disabled Widows Benefit
- EN – Employment Network
- EPE – Extended Period of Eligibility

Quick Reference

- EXR – Expedited Reinstatement
- FBR – Federal Benefit Rate
- IRWE – Impairment Related Work Expense
- MRD – Medical Review Diary
- P & A – Protection and Advocacy
- PASS – Plan for Achieving Self Support
- PM – Program Manager
- SEIE – Student Earned Income Exclusion

Quick Reference

- SGA – Substantial Gainful Activity
- SSDI – Social Security Disability Insurance
- SSI – Supplemental Security Income
- SSA – Social Security Administration
- TTWWIIA – Ticket to Work, Work Incentives and Improvement Act
- TWP – Trial Work Period
- WIPA – Work Incentives, Planning and Assistance
- 1619b – Medicaid Retention

Social Security Administration Programs

Title II – SSDI

- Insurance Policy paid for by FICA taxes/contributions
- Based on earnings
- Must have worked and paid FICA taxes for enough recent years to be covered (20/40)
- Must be
 - The worker who meets the medically disabled or blind definition

Social Security Administration Programs

Title II – SSDI

- Worker’s widow
- Surviving divorced spouse
- Worker’s child with disability
 - childhood definition of disability applies
- Unable to work at SGA
- Health Benefit is Medicare
 - 2 year waiting period
- Beneficiary

Social Security Administration Programs

Title XVI – SSI

- Form of Social Welfare
- Must have limited income and resources
- U.S. Citizen or meet the requirements for non-citizen
- Meet the definition of medically disabled or blind definition

Social Security Administration Programs

Title XVI – SSI

- Unable to work at SGA
- Health Benefit is Medicaid – effective immediately
- Recipient

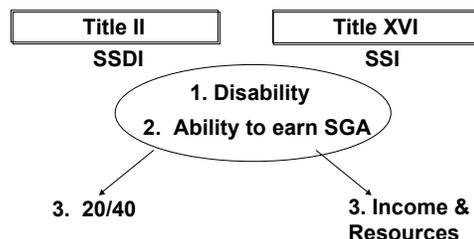
Adult Definition of Disability

- The inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity (SGA) because of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s)
 - that can be expected to result in death, or
 - that has lasted or that we can expect to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months

Childhood Definition of Disability

- An individual under the age of 18 that has a medically determinable physical or mental impairment which results in marked and severe functional limitations and which
 - is expected to result in death, or
 - has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months

Quick Summary



Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)

- SGA is defined in the regulations as work “that involves doing significant physical or mental activities . . . [and] is the kind of work usually done for pay or profit....”

SGA Amounts (Pre-Tax Amounts)

Calendar Year	SGA Threshold Amount Beneficiary Is Not Statutorily Blind	SGA Threshold Amount Beneficiary Is Statutorily Blind
2002	\$780	\$1,300
2003	\$800	\$1,330
2004	\$810	\$1,350
2005	\$830	\$1,380
2006	\$860	\$1,450
2007	\$900	\$1,500

Remember

- Every recipient’s disability status gets reviewed (CDR)
- Depending on disability(s) a one, three or seven year medical diary is scheduled
 - No exceptions (unless Ticket to Work has been activated)

Remember

- Prevents family members from continuing to receive checks if person is deceased
- Eligibility based on functional limitations, not diagnosis
- Two or more conditions could combine to qualify an individual where just one of the same disorders may not

Remember

- Financial reviews happen annually
- At age 18, all cases are re-reviewed and unless the individual is still in high school, disability can stop
- Benefits can continue if child is in high school until age 19 and 2 months
- Re-determination made based on adult definition

What Happens at Age 18?

- SSI: re-determination based on adult definition, unless still in school
 - Student Status (age 19 and 2 months)
- SSI: Parents income now NOT counted
- Ability to earn SGA is now considered

What Happens at Age 18?

- Could continue to receive SSDI, if eligible as a Disabled Adult Child (DAC), if not SSDI stops
- Must apply on own for SSI
 - all adult conditions now apply
- Could be terminated from parents SSDI benefits or begin receiving benefits on own

Student Earned Income Exclusion

- SSI Recipient
- Under age 22
- Regularly attending school
 - College or university, 8 hrs/wk or more
 - Grades 7 - 12 at least 12 hrs/wk
 - Training course at least 12 hrs/wk
- Up to \$1510 per month or \$6100 per calendar year of income is not counted

Student Earned Income Exclusion

- Example
 - High school student in certificate program also required to work during school year (Occupational Diploma)
 - Sep-Dec: \$6,100 earnings
 - Jan - May: \$6,100 earnings
 - Student has been able to earn \$12,200 of wages that have not been counted toward SSI Resources and Income

Let's Talk About Work...SSDI

- Monthly benefit based on previous earnings and amount of contributions to FICA tax
- 9 month Trial Work Period: Any income over \$640 per month is considered TWP
- 9 months of TWP per period of eligibility
- Rolling 5 year period to accrue 9 month TWP
- Unsuccessful Work Attempt

Let's talk about work...SSDI

- After TWP has been maxed (9), wages are reviewed
- If SGA or above, cash benefits cease
- If wages are under SGA, check continues, but financial status is reviewed annually

Let's talk about work...SSDI

- Extended Eligibility for 36 months if wages drop below SGA
- Expedited Reinstatement
- If cash benefits stop, Medicare coverage can continue for up to 93 months after the last month of TWP

SSI and Work...

- SSI maximum monthly amount is \$623/mo
- SSI monthly amount based on financial needs test
- Work Begins
 - \$65.00/\$85.00 unearned income exclusion
 - FBR reduced \$1.00 for every \$2.00 in earnings
 - As long as SSI eligibility continues, Medicaid continues

SSI and Work...

- If SSI is reduced to \$0 due to earnings, recipient can qualify for Medicaid 1619b coverage
- Wages in the amount of \$1,331 would be necessary to wipe an SSI check at free FBR of \$623
- Other work incentives may reduce countable income (PASS plans, IRWE, Student Income Exclusion, Blend Work Expense)

Work Incentives

- Ticket to Work
- SSDI and SSI recipients over 18 and under age 64
 - SSA determines ticket assignment
- Increases choices in obtaining the employment services, vocational rehabilitation and other support services needed to get and keep a job

Work Incentives

- Voluntary program
- No penalty for not using ticket
- No medical review while ticket is being used
- Financial reviews still occur

Work Incentives

- Recipients take “tickets” to approved Employment Networks – private or government agencies that have agreed to work with SSA in providing employment services to beneficiaries
- <http://www.yourtickettowork.org/>

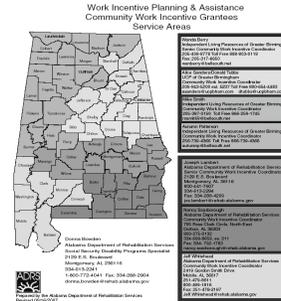
Additional Resources

- Unsuccessful Work Attempt
- Blind Work Expense
- IRWE: Impairment Related Work Expense
 - Deducts the cost of certain impairment related items and services that you need to work from gross earnings from countable income
 - Page 30 in Red Book

Additional Resources

- **Social Security Administration Red Book (www.ssa.gov)**
 - Available online, hard copy, Braille, etc.
- **Other Work Incentives**
- **WIPA Grant: Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Grants; SSA funded; multiple grantees; every county in Alabama**

CWIC Map — Community Work Incentives Coordinators



CWIC Map — Community Work Incentives Coordinators

- To provide beneficiaries with disabilities accurate information regarding work incentives, ticket to work, or other issues to enable them to make informed choices about obtaining, regaining, or maintaining employment

CWIC Map — Community Work Incentives Coordinators

- To enhance outreach to beneficiaries through coordination of efforts with the Social Security Administration, One-Stop Centers, vocational rehabilitation service providers and other stakeholders

CWIC Map — Community Work Incentives Coordinators

- To collect SSA required management information and interact with the SSA approved national data base
- To provide outreach and education

Tips for Working With SSA

- Become familiar with the benefit(s) you, your family member or your consumer receives
- Become familiar with the rules and impact wages may have on either benefit (red book or www.ssa.gov)
- Keep careful records yourself
- Don't rely on SSA to know and maintain your information

Tips for Working With SSA

- Always send SSA copies of check stubs, forms, etc.-- never the original
- Talk to SSA in person when possible and be prepared to wait
- Request to speak with a Work Incentive Specialist when your question involves work and continuation of benefits

Tips for Working With SSA

- Request date stamped receipts for any paperwork turned in to an SSA office
- Keep yourself informed and become aware of resources

Contact Information

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Upcoming Programs

**Family Planning Protocol:
Updates and Changes**
Monday, September 24, 2007
2:00 - 4:00 p.m. (Central Time)

Workplace Violence
Friday, September 28, 2007
9:00-11:00 a.m. (Central Time)

Upcoming Programs

**Short Term Birth Interval: Counseling
Family Planning Patients**
Thursday October 4, 2007
2:00 - 4:00 p.m. (Central Time)

**Mosquito Abatement in Louisiana
Post Katrina and Rita**
Thursday October 11, 2007
12:00 -1:30 p.m. (Central Time)